



PALM DESERT PRESENTS CALIFORNIA DESERT PLEIN AIR

The Desert Plein Air Association (DPAA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, promotes the centuries-old tradition of landscape and scene painting en plein air (outdoors).

Through its annual California Desert Plein Air Festival and year-round paint-outs, exhibitions, and enrichment/education programs, DPAA provides inspiration and opportunities for the public, DPAA members, and local artists of all levels to engage in plein-air painting.

Plein-air festivals have come and gone in the Coachella Valley over the years. DPAA, founded by Diane Moore (former president of Coachella Valley Watercolor Society and Desert Art Center) and Daniel Foster (former executive director of the Riverside Art Museum and Oceanside Museum of Art) is dedicated to organizing an annual event that grows into the largest, most important plein-air festival in the U.S. Southwest — and a destination event for the City of Palm Desert. The 2026 edition will be their fifth festival at the Artists Center in Palm Desert.

The California Desert Plein Air Festival begins with four days of paint-outs at scenic locations in and around Palm Desert, the Coachella Valley, High Desert, and beyond. The artists pick and study their vantage points, paint on site, and turn in their canvases for the exhibition and judging. The exhibition features a companion show featuring desert landscape paintings completed in the artists' studios, expanding artist participation and the scope of paintings available for the public to view and purchase at the festival.



WHY A PLEIN AIR FESTIVAL?

Plein-air painting in the Coachella Valley dates back to the 1870s when the Southern Pacific Railroad put down tracks through the desert and allowed artists to ride in exchange for their artwork, which the railroads used in advertisements to promote travel to the West. Many of the top artists of the era came through the desert. Some continued to the emerging artist colonies along the California coast — Laguna Beach, Santa Barbara, Carmel — while others settled into the Coachella Valley and nearby Mojave Desert.

Plein-air artists exhibit in specialty galleries and in markets with a predisposed audience for their work, relying on the circuit of regional plein-air festivals to exhibit and sell their paintings. These events draw enthusiast audiences from near and far, connecting artists to collectors and creating long-lasting relationships.

The California Desert Plein Air Festival spans approximately three weeks, commencing with artist arrivals and workshops. The core of the event features four days of paint-outs, complemented by ticketed events including the awards reception and lectures, culminating in a public exhibition and sale of all entries.

The awards program is comprised of an exhibition that will be evaluated and judged by esteemed and recognized experts, who will award artists cash prizes for Best in Show; first, second, and third places; and honorable mentions. The awards will be presented at a reception in the exhibition space that is open to the public.



THE AUDIENCE

California Desert Plein Air Festival stands out as the only event dedicated to historic and still-thriving field of plein-air painting in the Coachella Valley. Our region has several "general" art festivals — Indian Wells Art Festival, Southwest Art Festival, La Quinta Art Celebration — featuring "circuit" artists who travel from town to town with their painting, photography, sculpture, mixed media, textile, jewelry, and wearables. Additionally, Palm Springs Convention Center hosts an art fair featuring more than 50 contemporary art galleries from around the country, and the biennial Desert X invites a handful of artists from around the world to create site-specific installations across the region. The closest plein-air event to the Coachella Valley is the annual Plein Air Invitational in Borrego Springs, which takes place March 2—April 26, 2026. While "general" art festivals target local audiences, as well as visitors, plein-air events are destination events, attracting not only participating artists and their families, but also their loyal collectors. With the benefit of depicting familiar local landscapes, the artwork draws local audiences to marvel at and purchase the paintings, usually meeting the artist in person and developing a lasting connection. We'll invite this robust plein-air community to join us in Palm Desert through promotions in *Plein Air Magazine*, Southwest Art Magazine, and Western Art Collector as well as through targeted social media.

PROJECTED ATTENDEES: 3,500+

The attendance of this 2026 event will continue to increase based on the marketing and PR initiatives by *Palm Springs Life* (valued at over \$100,000) and Visit Greater Palm Springs will add to the promotional muscle.

175 + artist from across the United States

\$15,000 Cash Prize

The large cash prize attracts the top plein-air artists to participate in the festival. 2026 Exhibition categories include: Featured VIP artists, Desert Landscape or Desert Cityscape and Plein Air Competition.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Festival Dates: January 9th-February 1st, 2026

Headquarters: The Artist Center, Palm Desert

Public Exhibition Dates: January 15th-February 1st

Three (3) Categories of Entry:

- Featured/VIP-15 Artists (Invited and Hosted)
- Category 2 Landscape-75 (juried)
- · Category 3 Plein Air-50 (not juried for 2026)

INITIAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Two (2) Workshops:

- Workshop #1 January 8-9; 9am-2pm
- Workshop #2 January 9; 9am-2pm

Paint Days:

- January 10th Sign in, get substrate stamped, paint through January -13th.
- Turn in day and hang day (at Artist Center) January 14th.

Featured Artists arrival Monday January 12, departure January 16th. *This is one day longer than 2025.*

EVENTS

Ticketed/Invite Events:

- January 13th: Welcome Reception-The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens-New
- January 14th: TBD
- January 15th: Show Opening and Awards Reception The Artist Center

Paint-Outs (prior to turn in)

- January 10th: Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Visitors Center
- January 11th: El Paseo Shopping District
- January 12th: Ironwood Park, Palm Desert
- January 13th: The Living Garden Desert and Zoo

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING

Noncompetitive Paint-Outs:

(Open to the public to paint or watch)

- · January 20th: Lost Creek Canyon Ranch-date tentative
- January 27th: The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens

 date tentative

VIP/Invite Exhibition Evenings:

(docent led tour of exhibition at the Artist Center)-NEW

 January 22nd: Suggested group Big Horn or Vintage January 29th: Suggested group Big Horn or Vintage

Additional Programming:

Lead Up California Desert Plein Air Festival Branded Paint-Outs.

- October 2025
- · November 2025
- December 2025



WHY SPONSOR THE 2026 CALIFORNIA DESERT PLEIN AIR FESTIVAL?

Step into the heart of the desert's most vibrant artistic celebration — welcome to the 2026 California Desert Plein Air Festival presented by Palm Desert, poised to be a landmark event as it celebrates its fourth year with the City of Palm Desert as the host sponsor. This festival is more than just an art event; it's a dynamic fusion of the natural beauty of the desert landscape with the creative brilliance of over 175 juried and award-winning artists.

WHY THIS FESTIVAL?

- 1. UNIQUE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT: Immerse your brand in a niche audience that is passionate about both art and the distinctive desert environment. Thousands of attendees, ranging from art enthusiasts to affluent collectors, will gather to experience this unparalleled artistic celebration.
- **2. EXTENSIVE REACH**: With multiple venues and events—including workshops, a grand reception, and collaborative painting gatherings your sponsorship will receive extensive exposure across diverse platforms and settings. The festival's multi-channel marketing strategy ensures your brand is highlighted across social media, print, and digital channels, reaching a well-traveled and engaged audience.
- **3. PRESTIGIOUS ARTISTIC PRESENCE:** Be part of an event showcasing juried and award-winning artists competing for significant prize money. The high-caliber participation not only enhances the festival's prestige but also draws attention from major art media and collectors.
- **4. UNMATCHED BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES:** Integrate your brand into a celebrated event with high visibility and prestige. From branded workshops to exclusive receptions, there are numerous opportunities to position your brand at the forefront of the art and nature scene.
- **5. ENGAGE WITH ICONIC VENUES:** Take advantage of the chance to showcase your brand in some of the most renowned venues in the valley. This is a unique opportunity to connect with a sophisticated audience in an environment where art and nature converge beautifully.

Don't miss this chance to elevate your brand and connect with a passionate, art-loving audience. Be a pivotal part of the 2026 California Desert Plein Air Festival — where art meets desert, and your brand can shine.



2026 PATRON SPONSORSHIP

ON SITE ACTIVATIONS:

#1 Informal Paint-Out on El Paseo

Join us for an informal paint-out, where artists gather to create, share their process, and engage with the public at a beautiful location. Come watch creativity unfold!

Event Hours: TBD

Participants: 10–15 Artists # 2 Paint-Out on El Paseo

Join us for a paint-out, where artists gather to create, share their process, and engage with the public at a beautiful

location. Come watch creativity unfold!

Event Hours: TBD

Participants: 15–25 Artists

Locations: Painters will set up and paint along El Paseo.

#3 Lecture and Exhibit

Art historian Jean Stern, director emeritus of The Irvine Museum and an expert on paintings of the California Impressionist period, will lecture about the trajectory of desert plein-air and landscape painting, and Featured Artists of the California Desert Plein Air festival will exhibit a selection of their paintings.

Event Hours: TBD

Location: George Stern Fine Art, 73320 El Paseo, Suite 2, Palm Desert

#4 Quick Draw

Artists have a substrate is stamped to verify everyone starts on a blank canvas, board, or paper at the same time. The "quick draw" painting starts, and a bell rings when it's time for everyone to stop working. Artists bring their easel and painting to the Artists Center in Palm Desert, where judges evaluate their work and the public is invited to vote for their favorite(s). Awards are presented during a special reception.

Event Hours: TBD Participants: 15-20 Artists

Locations: Painters can set up and paint anywhere on El Paseo.

PR/MARKETING/ON-SITE

- California Desert Plein Air Festival add special El Paseo events tab on event promoting designated El Paseo events. Palm Springs Life team to work with FG to solicit event submissions for promotion.
- El Paseo to receive logo/name on California Desert Plein Air Festival print ads to start running November 2025 through January 2026. These ads will run in Palm Springs Life, The Guide, Arts+Culture, and other publications produced by Palm Springs Life Value: \$35,000
- El Paseo name on California Plein Air Festival email marketing promotions going to California Desert Plein Air and Palm Springs Life, email opt-ins 55,000k+ Value: 10,000
- El Paseo logo on select digital marketing promotions on palmspringslife.com and other media partners Value: \$2.000
- El Paseo logo and link on event website through 2026 event Value: \$2,000
- One-half page ad in the 2026 California Desert Plein Air Festival program, 3,000 copies distributed at California Desert Plein Air Festival, visitors' centers, El Paseo merchants, and high-traffic locations throughout the Coachella Valley Value: \$2,500
- 2 tickets to the California Desert Plein Air Festival Reception Value: \$200

POST EVENT AND MORE

- El Paseo recognized in a "Thank you to our sponsors" page in a select issue of Palm Springs Life Value: \$1,000
- A complete recap of the event will be provided to you approximately 60 days after the event Value: \$1,000

SPONSORSHIP FEE: \$5,000

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